Carlota

A Story of the San Gabriel Mission

by

Frances Margaret Fox

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"WHEN EVERYTHING WENT ENTIRELY WRONG MARY LOUISE THOUGHT LONGINGLY OF CARLOTA'S MOTHER"

(See page 3)

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A Story of the San Gabriel Mission

BY

Frances Margaret Fox

Author of
"Farmer Brown and the Birds"
"Little Lady Marjorie," etc.

ILLUSTRATED IN COLOURS BY

Ethelind Ridgway

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First impression, June, 1908

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To

A LITTLE BOY IN CALIFORNIA

WHOSE NAME IS

PALMER WILLETS

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Prefatory Note

To my Dear Lee Everett Joslyn, Jr., and his Little Brother Alan, "Back East" in Michigan:

HOW thankful we should be that we are not living in the year 1846, when there were no railroads in the great Southwest. In those days, wishing to tell you how to pronounce Spanish names, the letter would n't reach you for months, and you and your cousins, Ruth and Helen Wilson, the "Club," Harold Trumpour, Helen and Anna Harmon, little Naomi Hewitt, John Stewart, Wright Hitchcock, Paul and Jay Thompson, and ever so many other special friends might not know that when Jimmy called himself an "Americano

Muchacho" he was saying "American boy," and that the word "Padre," pronounced "pah-dray," means "father."

Mail was carried over the seas in 1846, so if we had all been living then, Ruth and William Higgins, Dorothy Avery and Elizabeth Van Praag, those dear little children "way back East," would have known about Carlota many weeks before you, because they live near Boston.

You should all remember that the letter "a" in Spanish words is always pronounced like the "a" in "father." "e" has the sound of "a" in "day." "i" is pronounced like "e" in the English word "me." "o" is always plain round "O."

The Doña Ysabel did n't lose her necklace. It was at home in her jewel box all the time. She was mistaken when she thought she wore it the last day of the Round-up.

Carlota's father and mother were called the Don and Doña (you must say "don-ya" on account of that mark over the "n")

because they were pure Castilians — belonged to old families in Spain.

Isn't it strange that the historians didn't know that Jimmy had anything to do with the worthless gunpowder manufactured in San Gabriel in 1846? All the histories of the time mention that it was tampered with, but who did it was a mystery. Isn't it fortunate, too, that Carlota and her family spoke English?

If we could see one another it would be pleasant to tell you many things that are not in the book. For instance, when gold was discovered in 1849, Jimmy's father located a mine, made his fortune, and went back to Boston with his family. After Jimmy graduated from Harvard he returned to California and married Carlota. He was James Radcliffe then, and greatly improved in general behaviour.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Jimmy's Sister	1
II	The Padre's Story	13
III	When Jimmy Was n't Brave	32
IV	Wash-Day in the Mountains	42
V	The King's Highway	50
VI	Santa Maria Louisa	63
VII	The Cat Whose Name Was Yankee	70
VIII	Two Sides of a Question	78
IX	Mary Louise and the Grizzly Bear	86
X	Carlota's Home	96
XI	Jimmy in Disgrace	105
XII	In the Padre's Garden	112
XIII	The Fandango	121
XIV	The Robber's Sash	134
XV	Jimmy Helps Make Gunpowder	139
XVI	To Save a Spanish Gentleman	147
XVII	Battle of San Gabriel	156
XVIII	The American Flag	170

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

"When everything went entirely wrong Mary Louise thought longingly of Carlota's mother" (*See page 3*) *Frontispiece*

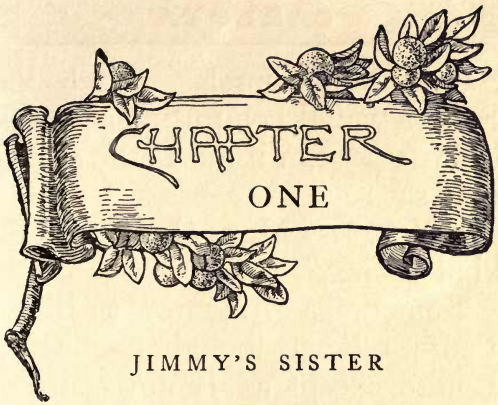
"The next second a horseman came from behind" 56

"Sometimes . . . Doña Ysabel told the children stories" 100

"Don Lisandro galloped into his own courtyard, bringing the news of the revolt" 121

"'Know a thing er two 'bout gunpowder myself,' suggested the Yankee" 142

"Tied it swiftly and firmly to the iron railing" 178



JIMMY'S SISTER

CARLOTA'S mother was the Señora Doña Ysabel Del Villar. That means she was a Spanish lady. The little American girl in care of the padre of San Gabriel never thought of Carlota's mother as the Señora Doña Ysabel. This little girl was Mary Louise Radcliffe, and she worshipped the Spanish lady as truly as the Indians worshipped the saints in the niches of

San Gabriel church. Surely the Señora would comfort a homesick little American if the Padre would only say:

"Here is Mary Louise. Be kind to her."

Sometimes it seemed as if the Padre seldom thought of Mary Louise except as Jimmy's sister; and to be Jimmy's sister was a trial in Southern California in days before railroads crossed the Rockies, and the Sierra trails were travelled by none but the brave.

Jimmy was usually in mischief. From the time he and Mary Louise sailed from Boston with their father and mother, the boy had continually teased his sister. Alone with him in the old Mission, she was kept almost constantly in tears.

To make his little sister cry was Jimmy's favorite pastime.

When everything went entirely wrong Mary Louise thought longingly of Carlota's mother.

"Jimmy," she ventured, one May day, "do you suppose the lady speaks English?"

"What lady?"

"Why, the Spanish lady; the one with the three little girls. The lady with the lovely face from the rancho over there — Señor Don Lisandro's wife."

"Dunno 'bout her," Jimmy replied; "but that Carlota can rattle off English good's a Yankee. Now, if you were like her, Molly, polly-doll-baby-cry-baby, we 'd have some fun. S'pose you 'd dare ride a broncho bareback? Not

you, oh, no! You're scared to walk three steps out on the desert on your own feet for fear you'll get lost, or something 'll happen to you. Tied to the Padre's apron-strings, you are. Wish I could go with the Del Villars to-morrow."

"Where are they going, Jimmy?"

"To the mountains to do their washing."

"Why do they go to the mountains? There's plenty of water at home. The Padre's Indians wash in the river."

"Well, my sweet sister, if you want to know, they're going to the mountains for the fun of it, for a wash-day picnic."

"My sakes, Jimmy, I'd like to go, too!"

"Oh, no, you would n't, doll-

baby. In the first place, it would scare you to death to ride in the caretta; and besides that, and what's worse, you'd have to ride under the Mexican flag. And what would Uncle Sam think of that in this year 1846?"

"Why under the Mexican flag?"

"Because, young lady, the Señorita Carlota told the Indians not to use sheets for a canopy over the caretta, but to take her father's biggest Mexican flag. Bully for Mexico!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," remonstrated Mary Louise. "Maybe I am a 'fraidcat, but I'm always going to stick up for my flag. So there! I wish we weren't living near the wrong ocean, and I don't like that Carlota."

"Well I do and so does the Padre. I intend to get acquainted. Then I guess you and the cat 'll be lonesome."

"Jimmy, please be good. Let's go for a horseback ride."

"Dunno but I will," agreed the boy. "What do you say to tradin' horses?"

"Why, Jimmy, you know my horse is a dear little burro and I 'd be afraid to try your broncho. He stood right up on his hind legs when he heard the bugle-call at the barracks yesterday. Oh, dear, I would n't dare try it."

"Well then, come on with me to the bear fight. I forgot it. Meant to have told you before."

Mary Louise shuddered and turned away. She could hear Jim-

my's mocking laughter until the boy was out of sight. Then she sought the burro and patted his shaggy neck a few minutes before climbing upon his back.

"Burrito," said she, "let's go over to the cactus hedge and maybe we'll see Carlota's mother. Perhaps she'll be out in her rose garden."

Surrounding San Gabriel Mission in the days of its prosperity was an unbroken cactus hedge, planted by Padre Zalvidea in 1809. As in many places the hedge grew to a height of twenty feet, a better defence was never imagined to keep out wild beasts and hostile Indians. It was a mile from the Mission buildings and Mary Louise had discovered an opening

through which might be seen the adobe home of the Del Villars. She had kept this a secret.

The rancho of Don Lisandro Del Villar, miles and miles in extent, had once been Mission property.

Mary Louise reached her hiding place in time to see preparations for the early morning trip to the mountains.

The first time the child saw a caretta she stood still in amazement, and even now, although she had been in California several months and had seen many carettas, she gazed as curiously as ever at the Del Villar equipage under the pepper trees.

"Stand still, Burrito," she whispered, "because there 's only one

opening in the cactus for me to see through and if I could n't sit on your back I would n't be tall enough. And oh, Burrito, Burrito dear, don't bray. Whatever you do, you sweet old dear, don't bray."

A caretta is a clumsy ox cart. Its two solid wheels are carved from the end of a big tree and have holes through the centre for the huge wooden axle.

An Indian was sweeping the bottom of the caretta while another was putting soap on the great axle to keep the wheels from squeaking. Mary Louise smiled as she watched the performance. Mats were then put in the bottom of the caretta and hooped poles were arched over its rudely made box.

"I wish they'd talk English," whispered Mary Louise as Mexican girls came dancing, laughing, singing, and chattering gayly as they brought baskets and bundles to the group under the trees. One girl unfurled the Mexican flag and danced beneath its waving folds before she gave it to the Indians who fixed the canopy.

"I wish it was the stars and stripes," grumbled the little girl behind the cactus hedge. "Now the Indian women are bringing lunch baskets to put in the caretta. I wonder why they don't smile. Oh, they're going to decorate with flowers! Carlota's mother thought of that, I know! Why does n't she come out, I wonder?"

Without the least warning Bur-

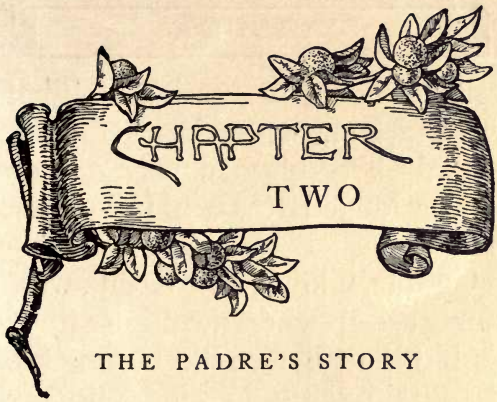
rito began to bray, whereupon Mary Louise left the scene as quickly as possible, keeping under the shadow of the cactus hedge until she thought it safe to go straight across to the Mission.

"Burrito, you bad little burro," remonstrated the child, "what made you do it?"

Perhaps the burro's pride was hurt. Anyway, he straightway, and for the first time, gave a jerk and a curious kick that sent Mary Louise sprawling among the wild oats. For three minutes the burro kicked at nothing, stared at the little girl, and behaved much as Jimmy might have under the same circumstances. He actually winked at the child, as much as to say, "Get on my back again if you dare." She didn't dare.

It was nearly dark when Mary Louise passed the barracks on her way to the Padre's house. Music and laughter greeted her ears. The sound of Spanish guitars floated across the courtyard, and as the child drew nearer, she recognized the Mexican national air sung in gay chorus. Next she heard Jimmy's voice alone accompanied by a guitar, then roars of laughter.

"They're teaching him to sing their old national air!" exclaimed the child, two bright spots burning her cheeks, "and he's learning it fast. That's the worst thing Jimmy Radcliffe ever did. Oh, dear! oh, dear! My brother is going to be a Spaniard! The only one that loves me in San Gabriel is my cat — my dear old Yankee cat."



THE PADRE'S STORY

MARY LOUISE and Jimmy never went to bed until they were reminded that even in Southern California children were not allowed to sit up all night.

Usually, a few minutes after the eight o'clock supper, the Indian woman, Docas, appeared with two candles, which was a signal understood by the little strangers to mean, "It is all over, you may as

well form in procession." That was the hour when Mary Louise missed her mother, and when Jimmy longed to be a full-grown man.

Carlota, Chona, and Rosita were sound asleep when the Padre drew his big chair before the blazing fire and sat quietly looking into the flames. Mary Louise and Jimmy watched the door opening upon the veranda. They expected to see Docas, bearing the solemn, flickering candles; but minutes passed, and no Docas appeared.

Jimmy winked at Mary Louise and Mary Louise nodded her head and smiled. Another minute, and the little sister made a venture. She feared the Padre might notice that it was bedtime, so to distract

his attention she climbed upon his knee, rested her head upon his shoulder, and said:

"I wish you 'd tell Jimmy about the Missions and about San Gabriel."

Jimmy immediately drew near. In broad daylight he would have no time to listen to stories of the Franciscan fathers, but to avoid going to bed he had been known to study the catechism.

"Oh, yes," besought Jimmy, his very freckles assuming a pious interest. "Do tell me about the Missions. Antonio Moreno showed me the cow-bell that was worn by the leader of the San Gabriel herds. He says he has seen thousands of Indians at work at one time in the grain fields here. And

he says he has seen four hundred carts going single file hauling wheat to San Pedro."

"What were they going to do with the wheat in San Pedro?" demanded the little sister.

"Ship it to old Mexico. And they used to take hides and tallow to San Pedro, too, — loads and loads and loads to send to Boston."

"Those good old days are gone forever," mused the Padre, with a glance at the Mission clock.

"I wish I knew more about the Padres," Jimmy quickly suggested.

"Please tell him about San Gabriel anyway," added Mary Louise.

"The boy is right in wishing to know of the old days," remarked the good Padre, never dreaming that Jimmy merely wished to put

off going to bed and that his sister was in league with him.

"Have you heard, my son, of Father Junipero Serra?" asked the Padre.

"No, sir," Jimmy replied.

"Ah, how strange. He was the first president of the Missions. When he was a young man in Spain, he became a Franciscan and when he heard about the Indians he so longed to convert their souls that he left his home and all that was dear to him to become a missionary in the new world. For many years he lived and worked in Mexico and then in Lower California, where he took charge of the Jesuit Missions after the King of Spain expelled the Jesuits."

"What were the Franciscans and

Jesuits? I don't understand," said Jimmy.

"Religious orders, my son," explained the Padre.

"I suppose they were like Presbyterians and Methodists," commented Mary Louise.

The Padre smiled. "We, the Franciscans," said he, "belong to the order of St. Francis, an Italian who founded the order. He was a wonderful preacher and his followers vowed to be always poor and to live simply. In days gone by the Franciscans wore coarse gray serge robes tied with hemp rope, but now, as you see, we wear brown. We are known as peacemakers."

The Padre then continued the story of the brave man who founded

the Missions in Upper California when California was a province of Spain, of his life full of hardships and suffering, of his wonderful success among the Indians and at last of his death.

"My boy, to-morrow you shall read a book on Father Junipero and his work," promised the Padre, whereupon a look of dismay spread over Jimmy's face which Mary Louise caught although the Padre was gazing into the fire.

"I — I think," faltered Jimmy, "that I 'd like to know more about San Gabriel."

"Ah, to be sure," resumed the Padre, "The Mission San Gabriel Archangel was founded September 8, 1771. It became the Queen of the Missions, my boy, and was

founded by Fathers Cambon and Somera. Fourteen soldiers and a corporal marched with them, also four muleteers in charge of the mule train of supplies. They rested at last in this beautiful valley carpeted then with wild flowers after the early rains. An old account says: 'The spot upon which they halted was a veritable field of gold.'"

"I can imagine it," whispered Mary Louise. "I love the flowers, but I should have been afraid of the Indians."

"With reason," agreed the Padre, "for there were many wild Indians here. A large number came to meet the missionaries, threatening them with death. Father Somera walked toward the warriors and un-

rolled a picture of Our Lady of Bethlehem on a large banner. That astonished the Indians who fell upon their faces and laid their bows and arrows upon the ground. They had never before seen a painting. Two Indians took off their shell necklaces and offered them as gifts before the picture."

"Where was Father Junipero about that time?" asked Jimmy.

"He was busy founding San Antonio. Father Junipero Serra planned a line of missions a day's journey apart, from San Diego to San Francisco. There were twenty-one Missions established; and the road connecting them, you know the old road, Jimmy, is called El Camino Real, the King's Highway."

"Our Mission was the fourth one founded. A little chapel was quickly built of wood, with a roof made of tules, and plastered with adobe."

"What are tules?" asked a sleepy voice.

"Tules, my little Mary, are bulrushes. The long stalks were used for the roof.

"When the building was finished the church was decorated with wild flowers, and among them were the lovely wild Castilian roses found growing here by the Padres."

"Wish I 'd been here then," murmured Mary Louise, whereupon Jimmy, unseen by the Padre, made expressive motions suggestive of the tomahawk lifting her

scalp and an arrow piercing her heart.

"In the beginning, there was much trouble with the Indians," resumed the Padre. "They attacked the Mission, but when their chief was slain they made peace. The soldiers behaved so badly it was no wonder the Indians at first refused to be baptized. There were only seventy-three converts the first two years."

"I don't see how the Padres ever got the wild Indians to settle down and live in houses," commented Jimmy.

"They began," was the reply, "by giving the Indians clothing, and in time taught them how to cultivate the earth. It was the Indians, Jimmy, who built this beau-

tiful church after the first Mission buildings were abandoned."

"Why were they abandoned?"

"Probably because they were too near the river and this present location was thought safer in case of floods. This church is all there is left now of the San Gabriel Mission buildings."

"What were the buildings like? Antonio Moreno says he can remember when there were great storehouses here filled with grain and hides and tallow, and one that was filled with bags of gold and silver."

"True, my son," assented the Padre. "The Mission building was made in a square like the Casa Del Villar,—you have seen that,—with a big court in the centre

planted with trees and blooming with flowers. There were fountains, too, in the court. All around it was a corridor opening upon the rooms of the fathers and the major-domo. There were rooms for travellers, — why, Jimmy, we are living in the ruins now. The apartment you and Mary Louise occupy was the schoolroom. Thousands of little Indians have been taught to read there.

"You know we had wonderful music in San Gabriel in the old days. Our Indians were taught to play the violin, flute, horn, cymbals, harps, drums, triangles, — in fact, it was a fine orchestra that climbed that outer stairway under the pepper tree to the choir loft in days gone by. To-morrow I will show

you parchment rolls of music printed by the Indians; big notes, children, that could be seen from a distance; many red notes among the black, for the Indians copied music more happily if they were allowed to use plenty of red.

"The Indian girls lived in a separate apartment, and were in care of good women who taught them to spin and weave flax, cotton, and wool, and to cook and keep house.

"What the Padres taught the Indians is marvellous. They made bridges, mills, machinery, irrigating canals; you've seen out here the ruined arches of an aqueduct that once brought water from the mountains to San Gabriel. The Indians

were taught farming and stock-raising. They became weavers, tailors, shoemakers, and soap makers. There were carpenters and blacksmiths among them. In fact, the Padres taught the Indians all the arts of civilization.

"The Missions became rich, and San Gabriel was one of the wealthiest. Children, in that little burying-ground beyond the church are laid seven thousand Indians, whose hands not only made the buildings but the very furniture in the Mission now."

"Well, what happened?" demanded Jimmy. "If the Indians had such a good time and everybody was happy, why is the Mission in ruins and the Indians all gone?"

The Padre shaded his eyes from the fire and said in a low tone:

"There was a revolution. Mexico became an empire, then a republic. The Padres remained loyal to the King of Spain and refused to acknowledge the Republic of Mexico. Then Mexico took away all power from the Padres by an Act called the Secularization Act. The Indians were told to leave the Missions if they wished.

"In San Gabriel it happened this way: A Spanish woman had been in the Mission for years; first in charge of the Indian girls, then as bookkeeper and treasurer. She paid the bills and took care of all the money. The governor of California, after Mexico became a republic, sent to San Gabriel a

demand for a loan of twenty thousand dollars. Eulalia refused to pay the money or give up the treasury keys. The treasury was broken open, the money stolen, and the government took control of San Gabriel. Then came the end. The shoe shop, the soap factory, the carpenter shop, the sawmill, the grist-mill, — everything went to destruction. The famous vineyards, the grain fields, — all was in ruins.

"In 1839, thirteen hundred Indians were living in comfort in San Gabriel. They owned over forty thousand cattle and sheep. Four years ago, in 1842, there were three hundred Indians left with only the vineyards to depend upon. Factories, cattle, grain fields, — all were gone."

There was silence when the Padre ceased, broken by the heavy breathing of the little girl in his arms.

"The child's asleep," said he. "Go, Jimmy, and find Docas. Curious that she's forgotten you."

Jimmy returned after what seemed a long absence. He looked frightened when he again entered the room.

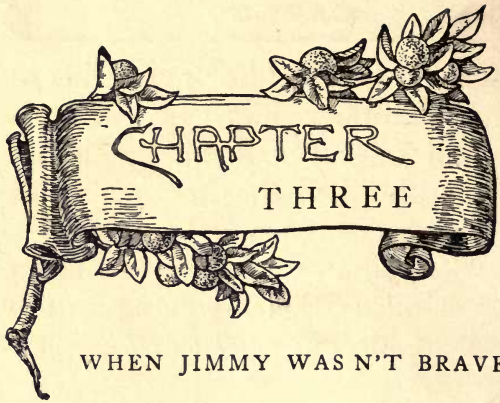
"Will the Mexicans kill all the Americans in the country?" he demanded. "That's what they are saying at the guard-house. My father and mother" —

"Are in the care of Providence," interrupted the Padre, "and the men shouldn't talk before a boy. Where is Docas?"

"Gone to San Gabriel Cañon

after her boy. They say he heard about a robber chief who threatens to kill us all and he ran away. He's afraid of the Mexicans and the Americans too. They say"—

"Go, Jimmy, ask Anita to bring the candles. I let you sit up too late. Children need sleep."



WHEN JIMMY WAS N'T BRAVE

IT is one thing to call your sister a coward in broad daylight and another to be brave yourself alone in the dark with bats flitting through ruined arches, coyotes howling near, and grizzly bears prowling around the mission.

Jimmy begged Anita to leave at least one candle, but she was firm in her refusal. The Padre had forbidden it. The girl undressed

Mary Louise, who slept so soundly she did n't miss her mother that night. Then she waited for Jimmy to get into his little bed at the further end of the long room. She seemed in unnecessary haste to be gone. Jimmy sat up in his dismal corner watching Anita's shadow grow longer and longer as she walked across the uneven floor, one candle above her head, until she and the light were lost in the darkness of the corridor and her footsteps sounded from afar.

The boy clutched at the bedclothes and listened. If you are frightened in the night, you should always listen; you are sure to hear something. Jimmy heard a little scurrying sound near the yawning fireplace. It might have

been a rat, it might have been—who knows what? Jimmy's eyes stared into the darkness. He saw visions of long-ago Indian school boys trooping by his corner, gazing at him with horrible faces and threatening to deal with him when lessons were over. Then he wondered if the Mexicans would rise up and massacre every American in California according to the rumor discussed in the guard-house.

Soon Jimmy's mind was so torn between imagination and realities, between the probable and the improbable, past happenings and present fears, that he almost fainted when he caught the sound of shuffling footsteps and a dark form appeared at the nearest window. It was an old-time Spanish win-

dow, with bars across the opening instead of glass. Jimmy tried to scream for help, but his tongue was useless; it could n't be moved.

"F-f-fit." The noise sounded like a remonstrance from a cat. Yet it was something bigger than a cat outlined against the bars. "F-f-fit." The creature was making a noise through his teeth.

"Jeemy! Jeemy! It's your friend Antonio! Are you asleep?"

"W-what? what do you want?" chattered the boy.

"My chulla — my knife. I 'm going on the hills with los Del Villars before daylight, and I want my chulla. It 's on the mesa."

"Where — where did you say your knife is?"

"On the mesa — the table."

"C-come and g-get it. I 'm c-cold."

"You must be seeck," agreed Antonio. "I would not ask you to get out of bed but I no can get in."

"Wait," suggested Jimmy. "S-stay th-there until I get your knife."

"Why, boy, you seeck, sure. Don't run so fast. You stub your toe on the tiles and bump your one nose. I no hurry. I stay here. You do that so fast you make me deezy," continued Antonio, as Jimmy passed the knife through the bars.

"Antonio, is it true that Blackbird has run away?"

"Yes, but Docas bring him back. She go after him many times when he goes on the hills."

"Why does he run away? Is it true about the robber?"

"I don't know. It may be. Blackbird hear too much talk about war. He poco loco (a little crazy). Never got over what happen when he little boy. That is why Docas watch all time."

"What happened to him, Antonio? Don't go, stay here and tell me. I 'm lonesome to-night."

"I tell you about Blackbird, Jeemy, then you never tease him again. He was about ten years old when the Padres refuse to give up the keys. Blackbird know trouble coming even when he little boy, and for two years he scared all time. Blackbird he away on the hills with his big brother tending sheep when the Padres at San Gabriel teach

Indians how to fight for Mission. Then Alvarado's soldiers come and attack Indians on the mesa—the plain out east here. The Indians lose and fly to Arroyo Secco, where they hide in deep cañon.

"Alvarado's soldiers find them and drive poor Indians away to Los Sierra Madre mountains, where they hide in Los Flores cañon."

"Were they safe there?" demanded Jimmy.

"No, because they are taken to the cañon by one traitor. He lead them wrong. Alvarado pay him to do it. Jeemy! Near the opening to the cañon, los Mexicanos put one cannon—hide it in the bushes, so when the soldiers fire down into the cañon from up high,

and the Indians try get away, they all shot. They could n't go. Blackbird's father is one who die."

"But you, Antonio," ventured Jimmy, "you are a Mexican."

"Si, Señor, but I Indians' friend. My father live at the Mission. He with the Padres when Blackbird came home. Blackbird hear the story. He act funny. He no talk, he no cry. One day his big brother is shot dead by Mexicano on cabillo—that is one horse, Jeemy. You know that. Mexicano on horseback. Blackbird see his brother die. After that Blackbird is always boy."

"Why, he 's big—he 's big and tall," corrected Jimmy.

"He's a boy all the time," insisted Antonio. "The inside of his

head never grow. His mother will bring him home to the Mission. Poor Blackbird afraid to stay here. He thinks the Americanos are after him."

"Will there be any fighting?" asked Jimmy. "Is it true that the Mexicans want to kill all the Americans?"

"There not be an Americano in the country if Don Lisandro Del Villar have his way, that sure," assented Antonio. "And now, Jeemy, go to sleep."

Antonio left quickly, and Jimmy, with one fearsome glance at his own corner, crept into bed beside his sleeping sister.

In the morning Mary Louise awoke first.

"What are you doing here?" she

inquired when Jimmy opened his eyes.

"Oh, I was cold," said Jimmy, "and, besides, I thought maybe you'd wake up and be afraid."

WASH-DAY IN THE MOUNTAINS

WHEN Mary Louise said she did n't like Carlota she spoke from the depths of homesickness. She was n't acquainted with Carlota. If she had ever looked carefully she would have seen that the Spanish child was a small image of her mother, the Doña Ysabel.

Long before daylight, Carlota, Chona, and baby Rosita were awakened and dressed. Four oxen

were yoked to the pole, and Carlota, the baby, and their mother climbed into the caretta, while Chona mounted her pony. Beside the caretta walked the Indian driver with his long ox-goad.

Spanish ladies and their daughters in the old days dressed in snow-white and as the family washing had been neglected for weeks, a long procession of horses led by Indians followed behind the caretta, each horse with a bundle of soiled linen fastened upon its back. Women and girls who were to do the washing trooped along on foot, sometimes beside the caretta, sometimes lingering behind the horses.

There were several Mexican children among the number, who

were allowed to ride in the caretta whenever they were tired. Carlota loved all the household children, especially the little Indian boys. She used to tell them stories by the hour and teach them to sing and dance.

Dogs innumerable, it seemed, accompanied the noisy expedition, scaring the rabbits, startling quail, and astonishing the owls.

The steps of the caretta were low and at the first peep of dawn Carlota climbed in and out many times, gathering wild flowers for Rosita and playing with the little Mexicans.

Once when coyotes howled, the Doña Ysabel called all the children to the caretta and kept them there until they reached the hot springs

in the mountains. Chona was compelled to trot slowly behind the caretta, though she longed to gallop on ahead or be the first to climb steep heights.

After breakfast in the cañon it was broad daylight. Carlota and Chona watched the women unload the linen, saw the men turn the horses loose to feed upon wild oats, and then wished they might be allowed to put soap on the clothes and wash them in the spring.

All around birds were singing and flowers blooming. The Mexican women laughed and chatted at their work, scarcely thinking it work under that shining sky. When the clothes were washed they were spread on the low bushes to dry.

Late in the afternoon Carlota

wandered away by herself to explore the cañon: at least she intended to go alone and did n't know that Chona was following at a respectful distance. Carlota liked to imagine herself an early Spanish explorer and as Chona did n't like the game and always refused to represent the handful of starving men under command of the great chief, why, the great chief ventured alone into the wilderness among savages. The cañon was an unusually good place to play Pizarro in Peru.

Suddenly in the trail before her Carlota saw a gayly dressed man—a Mexican gentleman she decided on the instant, at the same time wondering where he bought his gorgeous sash of embroidered scarlet silk.

"Buenos tardes, Señor," ventured Carlota, after waiting for the gentleman to speak first.

"Talk English," suggested the stranger, lifting his Mexican hat and bowing low.

"Certainly," agreed Carlota, "I learned English when I was a little bit of a girl."

The man's eyes smiled but his mouth did n't twitch as he surveyed the wee maiden.

"Your name, Señorita?"

"I am Carlota," was the reply.

The child then noticed that around the man's hat was a cord made of nuggets of gold. Not to be outdone in the matter of hats, she told the stranger that her father was the man who wore the jewelled sombrero; that every one in that

country knew the Señor Don Lisandro Del Villar.

In reply to brief questions Carlota gave a surprising amount of information regarding her home and family, when the stranger suddenly vanished. For several minutes he had seen Chona and when she turned and signalled wildly he kept his eye on the trail until Antonio Moreno appeared on horseback. Up to that moment Carlota had not dreamed of fear.

"Who do you think the mountain gentleman was?" she asked, with a slight tremble in her voice.

"The gentleman, Señorita Carlota, I think he is robber. You come stay with your mother."

"If it had n't been for me, what would have become of you?" in-

quired Chona, her dark eyes big and round with horror.

Carlota gave her sister a hug that nearly took her breath away. Riding home in the caretta that night, she fell asleep with her arms around Chona. Once Carlota awoke, but closed her eyes with a thankful feeling in her heart when she saw her mother's face above her under the stars.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

CARLOTA loved the old road leading past the Mission. Chona laughed about it—the careless Chona, who galloped across the mesa like a wild Indian and never would sit down and think quietly of days gone by and things that happened long ago. What did she care about the King's Highway?

The morning after the mountain trip Carlota begged Chona to go for a stroll after wild flowers.

"Where?" asked Chona.

"On the King's Highway," was the reply.

"I 'll go on horseback, I 'll race with you," agreed Chona.

"The Padres went on foot," objected Carlota.

"They did n't always," suggested Chona; "besides that, who 's a Padre?"

"We could play be Padres ourselves; this is a lovely morning to play that. You could be Father Cambon, I 'd be Father Somera, and we 'd" —

"Oh, Carlota," interrupted Chona, "that 's a stupid game. Besides, unless we 're on horseback you

know we are not allowed to go out of sight of the Mission buildings. I 'd rather play chase desert Indians. We could go like the wind and lassoo the chief before he could get to the mountains. Come, Carlota, our ponies are saddled. I 'm going."

" Please, Chona, come with me this once. Please."

" No, Carlota, you 'd make me learn some poetry or something. I 'd rather ride to the old mill. Babita is pawing the earth, she is so anxious to start. Good-by."

Carlota trudged along on foot and soon the little sister passed her, leaving a cloud of dust in the road and a feeling of loneliness in the air.

" Wish I 'd gone with her," confessed Carlota.

At that moment Chona looked behind and felt uneasy because she had left the Padre. Chona felt sure that by that time the white-robed figure on the highway was a Padre. Carlota waved her hand, smiled, and became the Padre, her white dress upon the instant changing to brown, and her face assuming nearly as possible the expression of an early Franciscan Father.

"I 've come from San Diego," mused the Padre, "I 've walked under blue skies and beside the shining sea just like the man on horseback in the poem. How I love this old road we Padres have made. Soon, when I have passed San Gabriel, the King's Highway will lead by snow-capped mountains, peaks, and waterfalls. I

can see a long procession of brown Padres marching on before me the hundreds and hundreds of miles to San Francisco to Mission Dolores. At all the Missions the little children will come to meet me, singing songs of old Spain and about Don Carlos the King.

"Oh, but I s'pose they'd sing chants and heavenly music for the Padre; I forgot. Don't believe I'm a brown Padre this morning after all. I feel more like Balboa or Pizarro or—or Alvarado. Not Governor Alvarado, I should say not. I mean that brave Spanish pioneer who made the leap at Acoma. The more I think of it the more I am sure I am Balboa. Oh, oh, oh. Here are mist-maidens. I never saw them except in the mountains."

Balboa stooped to gather a handful of the dainty white blossoms; then, that the mist-maidens might have light, she gathered a bunch of lantern of the fairies. After that Balboa was forgotten and a little girl began picking wild flowers, led on and on by Indian warriors, scarlet buglers, whispering bells, and woolly blue curls. Making a basket of her dress Carlota filled it with her treasures and then picked more. Violets, the wild forget-me-nots, and nameless blooms were eagerly and lovingly added to the store.

The child forgot that she was alone and did n't notice when a turn of the Highway left the Mission buildings out of sight. She thought of the poppy fields

beyond and hastened through a wilderness of wild mustard that rose abruptly on either side higher than her father's head.

"It's like walking through golden walls," whispered the child. "Enchanted walls, I think, because birds are singing all through it."

How it happened Carlota never knew; but the next second a horseman came from behind, snatched her from the ground, placed her on his saddle, and dashed through the long golden walls holding her firmly in his right arm.

Even in her fright Carlota noticed what a noble horse was bearing her away from home. It was a silver-mounted saddle, too. A gust of wind swept a fold of scarlet silk about her and then Carlota

"THE NEXT SECOND A HORSEMAN CAME FROM BEHIND"

knew that yesterday's robber was taking her to the mountains. There was no mistaking that embroidered sash.

What to do Carlota didn't know. To scream for help would be useless. Shutting her teeth together she wondered what her heroes would do in such a place. Pizarro would manage some way to escape. Balboa — but at that moment a sickening thought made Carlota's head droop for a minute against the robber. Both Pizarro and Balboa died frightful deaths.

"Do we ride too fast, Señorita?" asked the robber. His voice was kind.

"Are you going to kill me?" demanded Carlota, feeling that it might be well to know the worst.

"There now, child, don't think of such distressing things. Kill you? I'll take care of you as tenderly as your own mother. Kill you? No, indeed, Señorita, you have nothing to fear, and this is a perfect day for a ride. I'm taking you to my cave near the loveliest cañon in all California."

Balboa would n't have cried, Pizarro would n't have cried, Alvarado would have scorned tears, but Carlota wept aloud.

"You — you turn around and take me home," she wailed in Spanish, forgetting that her captor, in spite of his Mexican dress, had requested her to talk English.

"Were you speaking to me?" asked the robber.

"I say you take me home," sobbed the child.

"Too inconvenient," was the reply. "It occurred to me yesterday that a man of your father's wealth would pay for the return of his daughter. I have seen the jewelled sombrero, little lady. I know that it is worth at least five hundred dollars. I shall send a messenger to Don Lisandro and offer to exchange you for that piece of vanity and a few bags of gold."

"My father won't give you his jewelled sombrero," was the retort. "All the soldiers in the barracks will be sent after me and they 'll put a bullet through you!"

"If they find me, Señorita, and if they find you," was the response. "My cave gives up no secrets. I 'll

have the bags of gold and the sombrero."

"You let go of me, you 're squeezing me to death with your old arm. I don't want you to touch me!" said Carlota.

The mustard field was left behind. The robber's horse bounded up one hill and down another, through thickets, past desert places, on and on toward the mountains. Not a human being in sight.

"Very well, Señorita, I feared you might fall off. It would be necessary to hold a little Yankee girl, but I 'll let you take care of yourself. It would n't do any good to try to get away from me here, so if you dared jump you 'd only break your pretty neck for nothing."

Many and many a time Carlota

had watched parties of young people going miles and miles on horseback to picnics, each Californian with his sweetheart on his saddle, both with wild flowers on their hats and joy in their hearts. Carlota had even dreamed of the time when she would be one of a merry picnic band galloping away in the same gay style. She thought of her dreams and leaned forward to be as far as possible from the robber.

A turn of the trail and a group of horsemen appeared. They were Americans from the San Gabriel settlement who had been several days in the mountains on a fishing trip.

Carlota instantly recognized Jimmy's Uncle Jack. Before the robber had time to think, the child

screamed for help and leaped from the saddle.

It was over in a flash. At first Uncle Jack and his friends thought only of Carlota; and, by the time they were sure she was unhurt, the robber had made his escape.

SANTA MARIA LOUISA

"WHAT are you made of, child?" demanded Uncle Jack, as Carlota, laughing and crying, climbed upon his horse, patted its neck, and talked hysterical nonsense in Spanish.

"She did n't even bump her head," he explained to his friends.

"I 've practised the Alvarado leap," the child replied. "I used to get hurt, but now I can jump

pretty well. After the robber let go of me I watched and watched for a chance to get away from him, but there was no use jumping off his horse just to show him I could do it. My! was n't I glad when I saw you, Señor!"

"Call me Uncle Jack," suggested the man, "I 'm more used to it."

"Oh, dear," sighed Carlota, "I forgot that you are an Americano. Anyway, surely my father will thank you for bringing me home safely."

"Nothing to thank me for, child, I did n't even pick you up. You scrambled upon your own feet and I believe you captured my horse."

Carlota laughed merrily. "I never was so glad to see a horse in my life. But, Señor,— Uncle Jack, if I had not jumped from the rob-

ber's saddle, what would you have done?"

"Rescued you, of course, though even that would not have been worth mentioning, as there were six of us, all armed. Your robber would have had no chance. We might have given chase anyway. Your father would n't have let him escape."

"Possibly," assented Carlota, "but he will thank you. I almost hope he will forgive you for being an Americano when I tell him that you saved me."

"See here, little girl," Uncle Jack remarked in serious tones, "I wish no thanks from your father, but you might do me one great favor. Will you promise?"

"Gladly," agreed Carlota, "that is — of course you know I can't

belong to the United States. My father says we 'll never live under your flag if we have to sell everything and go back to Old Mexico or even to Spain. He says, though, the Americanos can never conquer the Californians and if war is declared he 'll fight for the Mexican flag as long as there 's a bit of green bunting in the country and while he has a drop of blood left in his veins! Oh, I hope it is n't anything about our flags!"

How Uncle Jack laughed.

"You stand by Old Mexico," said he, "that 's all right. I only want you to be friends with my little niece."

"Oh, she 's the pink and white girl at the Mission—Jimmy Radcliffe 's sister."

"Yes, that's Mary Louise, and if she is my niece, I must say she's the dearest, sweetest child that ever sailed around Cape Horn."

"I have never seen her," said Carlota, "but Chona, who always sees everybody and goes everywhere, Chona says she's pretty."

"Mary Louise is good, you may be sure of that; she is a regular little saint. The child is so homesick since her mother went away it is pitiful to see her."

"It must be dreary at the Mission," interrupted Carlota, "and I will go and play with her, Chona and I together. But why did her mother have to go away? Some one told Chona that her father, Señor Thomas Radcliffe, came here to buy lands for a big cattle

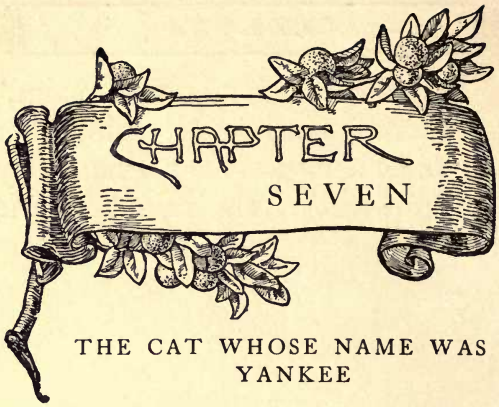
rancho, but that he went prospecting—that he believes there's gold in the California mountains."

"That is so," was the reply, "but he was taken ill and six weeks ago the children's mother left them with the Padre and went to take care of him."

"That poor little lonesome girl!" exclaimed Carlota. "You tell her I will come and see her to-morrow. We're all going to the Chino rancho to-day. Oh, I'm so glad I'm not in that robber's cave! I was scared almost to death."

Late that afternoon Carlota had a glimpse of Mary Louise in the Padre's garden. The setting sun behind the American child's golden hair changed the shining ringlets into a halo.

"He said she was a saint," whispered Carlota, clasping her hands as she gazed. "The pretty little girl. Why, she's Santa Maria Louisa."



THE CAT WHOSE NAME WAS YANKEE

DAYS passed and Mary Louise watched in vain for Carlota. It seemed to the little girl that Yankee, the cat, was her only comfort.

"I am sure we don't like that Carlota," she murmured, gathering the cat in her arms after standing for half an hour beside an adobe wall, gazing toward the Casa Del Villar.

"I've got you, anyway," she added, and the cat purred and

purred and purred just as he did when Mary Louise was seasick on the voyage around Cape Horn.

"The sailor who gave you to me didn't know that you'd be my only friend in this Mexican country. Oh, Yankee, why did we ever leave the United States!"

Jimmy overheard his little sister's last remark. "Yankee never did leave the United States, Señorita," he declared.

"I am not a Señorita," pouted Mary Louise, "and you don't know any more about that cat than I do."

"Well, I know this much," argued the boy, "that Yankee was a stowaway cat, now was n't he?"

"What if he was?"

"He went on board ship one

time in Valparaiso, and that's in South America, is n't it?"

"Well, but what of it?" persisted Mary Louise. "The cat changed cars, that's all. He probably went to Valparaiso on a Boston boat. I 'm sure I saw this very cat in Boston!"

"That's all you know," Jimmy went on, "that cat, Miss Radcliffe, came on a Spanish whaling vessel from Spain. You ought to see how he rubs up against Antonio Moreno. He rcognizes a countryman, I tell you. Why, that cat is pure Castilian —Spanish to the backbone!" and Jimmy began whistling the Mexican national air.

"They don't have whaling vessels in Spain," sputtered Mary Louise, "and that's all you know about

anything. Dear old cat, I can't imagine what I'd do without you."

"Better not let Yankee see Carlota," Jimmy suggested, grinning at the sight of his sister's unhappy face, "and — and my dear Miss Radcliffe, don't cry; if you get that cat wet he'll run away to see Carlota, sure."

"Yankee would n't look at Carlota," was the retort.

"Would n't, hey? What'll you bet?"

"Yankee belongs to the United States, don't you, Yankee?" was the response.

"You wait," predicted Jimmy. "The first chance that cat gets to go over to the Casa Del Villar, he'll go. Can't help it. He's Spanish!"

Mary Louise had the last word. "He's American!" she insisted.

At that moment the Padre appeared. It's bad manners to quarrel in the presence of a Padre. Mary Louise wiped her eyes, then listened with Jimmy to a talk on orange culture. It was interesting to know that the first orange trees in California were planted by the Padres in San Gabriel. Mary Louise asked many questions: but Jimmy kept the eye of his mind on Yankee.

When the bells of San Gabriel sounded the evening chimes and Mary Louise at the Padre's feet listened with penitent heart as she recalled her many imperfections and especially the unkind things she had said to her brother but a

few hours before, that brother was hastening toward the Casa Del Villar with Yankee in his arms.

In the gathering darkness, for night descends quickly in southern California, Jimmy crept close to an outer porch of the adobe house where Carlota sat with a book in her lap, and released Yankee.

Instantly Carlota recognized the cat. Springing to her feet and stamping upon the stone floor she exclaimed:

"Go home, you gato Americano!"

Jimmy thought his scheme had failed: but he did n't know Yankee. Approaching the little Spanish girl Yankee made a few mewing remarks, waved his tail and rubbed himself against her in a fashion of his own that proved irresistible.

Carlota petted him and then talked pages of Spanish that Jimmy interpreted to suit himself.

Mary Louise wept for her cat that night, but Jimmy did n't dare do more than sympathize. The next day he went in search of his sister's pet and told this story on his return :

" Found your cat. Did n't bring it home because I thought you'd have to go after it yourself or you would n't believe where I found it."

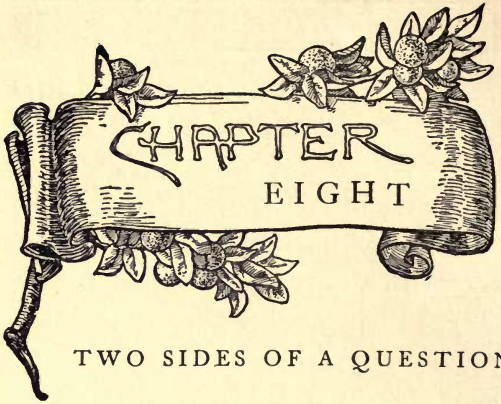
" Oh, where, Jimmy?"

" Over to Carlota's. She was giving it milk to drink out of a blue bowl that is exactly like the Mission dishes — s'pose Yankee did n't know the difference."

The next day the cat returned

and begged to be loved. At first Mary Louise refused to caress the runaway.

"You old Spanish cat," she sobbed, "you better go back and stay with Carlota. I don't like her — but come here, Kitty, Kitty, Kitty, nice Kitty, oh, Yankee! Don't go over there again! Remember, Kitty, we belong to the Stars and Stripes!"



TWO SIDES OF A QUESTION

SUNDAY was a hard day for Mary Louise. When she tried to get ready for church Jimmy refused to button her dress and she had to ask Anita for help. Perhaps Anita did n't mean to be unkind but she jerked the tiny buttons and yanked at the hair ribbons; did n't even try to tie a pretty bow. Something Anita said about troublesome Americanos made the little girl

cry; and at last when she started for church, Jimmy had run away.

Alone, Mary Louise, red-eyed and miserable, entered the open doors beneath the choir loft. It was nothing to her then that those massive doors were hand carved and brought from Spain. Years and years afterward, when Mary Louise was an old lady, she saw those same doors at the World's Fair in Chicago, and smiled.

That morning, feeling thoroughly dismal, she remembered that beneath the chapel were buried many of the greatest men of early California. At the foot of the altar rested Padre Sanchez, once president of all the Missions. It was particularly mournful to think of

him, as he was said to have died of grief at the ruin of San Gabriel.

While Mexican families began seating themselves around her the child tried to imagine scenes of other days when the church was filled with Indian worshippers sitting or kneeling upon the tiled floor and musicians in gay costume filed into the choir loft from the outer stairway, playing upon their harps and violins.

Mary Louise missed her own church. Everything about her in that foreign land was new and strange. As usual, the image of Saint Gabriel behind the altar, with Saint Francis and Saint Padua on either side, were seen dimly through a mist of tears.

The Padre did n't compel Mary

Louise and Jimmy to attend services in the chapel, but he was pleased, that good man, whenever he saw the little sister in his congregation. How surprised he would have been if he had known that Sunday after Sunday the little Americano followed in the footsteps of departed Indians for the purpose of gazing upon the lovely face of Señora Doña Ysabel.

When Mary Louise dried her tears and began studying the paintings of the twelve apostles upon the walls, the Del Villar family appeared. Don Lisandro made her smile. She and Jimmy often wondered how their father would look dressed in Spanish costume. The straight, strong man wore an exquisitely embroidered white shirt

open at the neck. His vest was yellow silk trimmed with silver braid. His short coat was crimson velvet. The trousers of the same color and material were slashed on the outer side to the knee and laced over long white silk stockings that wrinkled. Around his waist was tied a bright blue silk sash heavily fringed.

The Doña Ysabel, his wife, wore a short-sleeved white gown of soft silk with a rose pink sash. Carlota and Chona were also in white.

From her corner Mary Louise watched the four, one minute wondering how Carlota's mother could wear such an immense back comb, the next second marvelling that Chona managed to keep so quiet and look so pious.

At last Carlota turned around, meeting a wistful gaze from two big blue eyes. Mary Louise smiled, but Carlota, pretending not to see the friendly advance, stared at the wall behind the little stranger, although her cheeks flushed until they were nearly the color of her father's coat. Hurt and angry, Mary Louise swallowed the lump in her throat and winked back the tears.

One little act redeemed that morning. Outside the chapel, Carlota's mother, in passing the American child, lifted a bright curl and called it hair of gold. A loving look accompanied the words and for the moment Mary Louise was happy. Later she hugged the cat and wept upon his soft fur.

"That Spanish girl is horrid," she wailed, "and Yankee, don't you ever, ever, ever go near her, ever, ever!"

That night Jimmy again guided the footsteps of the cat in the direction of the Del Villar rose garden, and once more that day Yankee was eagerly welcomed.

Carlota talked Spanish to the cat and whether Yankee understood it or not, it was safe to confide in a creature who could repeat neither Spanish nor English.

"Kitty," said Carlota, "if your mistress could only know that my heart is pretty near breaking in ten pieces on account of the war and because I can't even speak to her, I would be glad. I am so sorry for that poor little homesick girl,

but what can I do? My father hates the Americanos and he told me I must n't even look at that pretty Santa Maria Louisa. I wonder what her Uncle Jack thinks?

"And, oh, Kitty, my father says he 's going to be ready to drive the Americanos out of the country the minute war is declared between Mexico and the United States. He wants to fight, and, oh, he 'll be killed. Oh, dear, maybe we 'll all be dead before next Christmas.

"Don't go home to-night, Kitty, stay here and be a Spanish cat until to-morrow."

MARY LOUISE AND THE GRIZZLY BEAR

IF there was one thing Mary Louise feared more than another in the vicinity of San Gabriel, that one thing was the grizzly bear. Yet the time came when the little girl rejoiced that she had had an adventure with the biggest, fiercest grizzly bear ever dragged into the Mission.

Antonio Moreno often told Mary Louise and Jimmy bear

stories. He said that every Spanish family in the country related thrilling tales of grizzlies. The bravest young men used to ride out alone to kill the bears. When a young man lassoed one, he dragged it to a tree, slipped out of his saddle and killed the beast with one blow from his Mexican hunting knife. Sometimes these young men lassoed bears for the fun of dragging them through the streets at night past the homes of their friends. Once in a while two or three bears trotted down the hills into a village where young men were serenading their sweethearts. This made a change in the music.

Herdsmen and hunters were so often killed by grizzlies that one of

the governors of California appointed expert bear hunters to destroy them. Antonio Moreno liked especially to tell the children of brave feats performed by one of these experts, Don Rafael Soto, who used to hide in a pit covered with logs and leaves and baited with fresh beef. When the bear came for the beef Don Rafael shot him from beneath.

Mary Louise wished that Don Rafael had killed all the bears instead of leaving such vast numbers around San Gabriel. She thought Jimmy was nothing short of a savage because he never missed seeing a bull and bear fight if he could reach the scene.

There was a time when Jimmy thought the young Mexicans, who

went to the foothills and lassoed and dragged bears into the Mission for these fights, were braver men than any heroes of the American Revolution. At least, so he told Mary Louise.

Many an hour the boy practised with a reata. He lassoed whatever he chose from sticks of wood to the cat and Mary Louise. Once the little sister narrowly escaped losing an ear. After that episode the Padre interfered. The only diversion left Jimmy for the next few days was scaring his victim with horned toads and showing her bear tracks near the school-room window. He made the tracks himself, but convinced the little girl that bears were in the habit of climbing to the window and gazing upon her as she slept.

It was early summer, the time of the yearly round-up, that Mary Louise met her grizzly. Thanks to the Padre, the child knew that from early days a round-up took place once a year, when cattle were driven in from surrounding pastures and the herds belonging to different ranchos were separated. The young cattle were then marked with the brand of their owners. The Padre showed the children the famous old branding iron of San Gabriel. Jimmy thought himself the hero of that particular round-up because Antonio Moreno was appointed one of the special officers of the plain. Their duty was to settle disputes and keep order.

At the feast that followed the round-up it was rumored that Car-

lota's mother had lost a pearl necklace, an heirloom from Spain. Mary Louise and the Padre searched through the early afternoon for the treasure, then the Padre returned to the Mission, leaving Mary Louise to follow later on her burro.

Most of the time the little girl lingered apart from the merry-makers, always trying to get a glimpse of Carlota's mother.

Two hours passed when it was discovered that the Señora Doña Ysabel was missing. At that announcement dozens of young men sprang into their saddles and galloped in search of her.

"We know which way she went, don't we, Burrito?" whispered Mary Louise. "She walked over that way toward home, looking on

the ground, probably hunting for her necklace. We'll find her, and oh, Burrito, she'll speak to me; she'll say, 'Why, have I been gone long? How strange that they think I'm lost. Thank you, little girl, for telling me!'"

Thus Mary Louise went in search of the Doña Ysabel and came without warning, except from the frantic burro, face to face with a grizzly bear — a more terrible bear than she had ever imagined. Certainly the burro did all he could to prevent the meeting, but Mary Louise did n't understand why he became so unmanageable. The child screamed, expecting the next minute to be killed.

Instead of giving chase the bear merely growled, snarled, and turned

toward a rock almost hidden in the thicket. The burro whirled, but in that second Mary Louise heard a voice calling to her from the nearest crevice in the rock.

"Fly, child, go for my husband quick — quick. I could barely squeeze in here — fly, fly! I am afraid the bear will turn on you."

When Burrito started homeward he did n't choose his steps but tore through the thicket regardless of the safety of the frightened child upon his back. Her clothes were torn almost off and her face and arms were bleeding from thorns and underbrush when the burro finally threw her almost under the hoofs of Don Lisandro's horse.

Mary Louise managed to tell

her story before she fainted. The next thing the child knew she was lying on a couch in the Casa Del Villar. Carlota was kneeling beside her, clinging to one little hand, and Mary Louise could scarcely believe it was her own hand so lovingly held. On the couch, smoothing back the golden ringlets, sat Carlota's mother, pale but unhurt. Standing near was Don Lisandro, who looked upon her with the tenderness of a father instead of appearing the haughty Spanish gentleman she had known.

"Where's Jimmy?" asked Mary Louise.

Carlota smiled and kissed Jimmy's sister. "He's listening to the bear growl," she answered,

"and wishing that he had been a man and could have lassoed that bear the way my father did."

"What 's the matter with me?" continued the child, "am I hurt?"

"Not a bit, but mamma says that the Padre and Docas and Anita will have to live without you for a while. You 're going to stay here and have a good time."

"But—but your father?" faltered the little American.

"My home is yours," said Don Lisandro.

CARLOTA'S HOME

CARLOTA and Chona did everything possible to please their guest. The Padre excused her from lessons. He told Mary Louise that she could learn more Spanish during her visit with the Del Villars than he could teach her in many months; an arrangement which satisfied all children concerned except Jimmy, who was obliged to copy Spanish sentences

by himself in the presence of the Padre. It would never do to aim paper wads at the Padre, nor drop a horned toad down his neck, hence Jimmy missed his sister.

As days passed Mary Louise was thankful that Jimmy was left at the Mission. He would have shocked Carlota's father and mother almost beyond hope of forgiveness. When Jimmy tried his best to be good he was n't half so well behaved as the rudest Spanish child.

Not only did Carlota and Chona obey their father and mother strictly and as if obedience was their greatest pleasure, but all the children connected with the household were angelic in their ways. They never teased their parents nor whined, nor cried.

The principal room in the Del Villar house, which was made of adobes, or sun-baked brick, with a roof of red tiles, was a large hall in the centre. This was designed for dancing parties and Mary Louise thought it the most attractive room she had ever seen. The mantelpiece was brought from Honolulu, the iron supporting it from China, while the beam ceiling and sides of the room were of redwood from the Sonoma forests. Bearskin rugs and goatskins covered the floor.

There the children played during the noonday heat and scarcely an evening passed without witnessing a gay gathering within its walls.

The living rooms and bedrooms opened off the hall and many a night

Carlota, Chona, and Mary Louise, having been sent to bed, begged to have their door left open that they might hear the music of the guitars and violins and watch the dancers until they could no longer stay awake.

It is strange, but Mary Louise missed her own mother more during those happy days than before. She was accustomed to a mother who gave her children an occasional hug, cuddled them beside her in the firelight and tucked them in bed at night. Even Jimmy was a good boy when his mother's arms were around him. Mary Louise soon felt that the lovely Doña Ysabel was n't nearly so sweet as her own mother.

Carlota, with permission, showed

Mary Louise her mother's jewels; long strings of pearls and rubies; gold buckles encrusted with precious stones; pins of all shapes and sizes; curious necklaces from Old Mexico, and priceless rings, many of them heirlooms from Spain. One day Carlota unlocked a door and showed Mary Louise Don Lisandro's bags of gold.

Sometimes, seated in a massive arm-chair in the long hall, Doña Ysabel told the children stories, while Carlota, Chona, and Mary Louise lay on a goatskin rug at her feet.

Carlota loved to hear stories of Father Serra and of the time just before his death when he set out from San Gabriel to found the Mission of San Buenaventura

"SOMETIMES . . . . . DOÑA YSABEL TOLD THE CHILDREN STORIES"

with the governor and seventy soldiers in the procession. Mary Louise preferred listening to legends, particularly the legend of the San Gabriel bells. It was the story of a maiden in Spain who died of grief because her sweetheart was killed close by the unfinished San Gabriel church, and who, when she was taken to see the casting of the bells which were to be sent over the seas to the Mission, threw in her gold rings and jewels. Other Spanish maidens followed her example, which accounts for wonderful tones of sweetness in the San Gabriel chimes.

"The Santa Maria Louisa is so fond of legends," Carlota suggested one evening in the great hall, "tell

her the legend of the rain prayer." And Doña Ysabel told it as follows:

Legend of the Rain Prayer

In the long ago the vineyards and the grainfields of San Gabriel needed rain. Evening after evening the Padre, the Spanish settlers in the village, and the Indians looked toward the mountains for signs of rain. Snow was deep upon the peaks, but not a cloud. Day after day the sun beat down upon the valley and the plains, scorching the grainfields and withering the vineyards, while the cattle died of thirst. The river-bed, wide and dry, stretched toward the sea a path of burning sand.

Upon their knees the Padre, the settlers and the Indians knelt beneath the open sky and prayed for rain. They bowed themselves low in the dust, beseeching

for rain. Yet there came no rain or clouds around the mountain peaks, although the settlers and the Indians were dying.

At last the Padre, half despairing, spoke these words: "Oh, my people, the Father will not listen to our prayers. He has turned away his face. We have sinned. But the little children — God will hear the little children. Let us send them to the vineyards to pray for mercy — to beg the Father to send us rain."

At twilight, when the Mission bells were ringing, a long procession of little children robed in purest white obeyed the Padre's will. Straight to the vineyards went the little children, two by two, and on their knees they sang the harvest song. Then, folding their hands, with upraised faces they prayed the Heavenly Father to send them rain. These were the beautiful children of long ago.

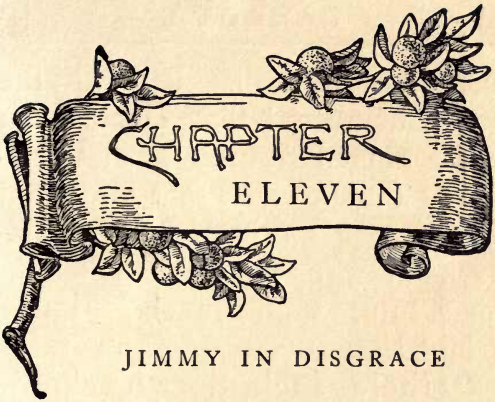
Still rang the sweet-toned Mission bells

and while the children knelt so earnestly praying "Oh, Father, send us rain," there came a sudden breeze from off the sea. Around the mountain peaks dark clouds began to cluster and the waiting people said, "The Father hears their prayer."

Swiftly came the darkness, but with it fell the rain upon the dying valley and the little Mission town.

Then the Padre in the chapel knelt and all the people with him while they thanked the pitying Father for the rain. Then the little children sang again the harvest song.

This is the legend Carlota's mother told the children when the Mission bells were ringing the evening chimes.



JIMMY IN DISGRACE

ONE day the Padre, intent upon his sermon, forgot about Jimmy's lessons, and Jimmy, glad to escape the lessons, began looking around for something to do. With both Mary Louise and the cat at the neighbor's, there was no one he could safely tease.

Wandering into the garden, Jimmy discovered his Uncle Jack's oldest, worst-looking sombrero lying

on the adobe wall. Instantly the boy remembered that Uncle Jack had arranged to meet Don Lisandro at three o'clock that afternoon to purchase a strip of land adjoining some property he had bought for a future cattle ranch. Jimmy grinned.

"Uncle Jack does n't know what's what or he would trim his sombrero before he goes to meet the great Don. How he will look beside that gay Spanish gentleman! Let me see, what can we do for you, Uncle Jack? No jewels on your sombrero? Si, Señor, you need help! No sabe Americano without jewels on his sombrero!"

The sun was bright and strong. Jimmy picked up a bit of thick glass, and, after some practice,

managed to focus the rays of light to his satisfaction. At first he burned scallops around the sombrero's brim.

"Si, Señor," he chuckled, "Americano muchacho make you jewelled sombrero, sabe?"

Not content with scallops alone, Jimmy burned into the sombrero outlines of bears and other beasts as well as suggestions of blazing jewels. Next thing he knew Uncle Jack appeared in search of his hat. Jimmy hid outside the adobe wall to hear Uncle Jack's remarks. To the boy's surprise, his uncle, seeming in great haste, snatched his hat, jammed it on his head, mounted his horse, and galloped away to keep his engagement with Don Lisandro.

"The Señor did n't notice the decorations," grumbled Jimmy, climbing upon the adobe wall to watch the retreating horse and rider. "Don Lisandro will, though, and then I wonder what will happen? I did n't think he would wear that old sombrero this afternoon, anyway."

An hour later Antonio Moreno told Jimmy what happened and advised him to keep out of his Uncle Jack's sight for several days, if possible.

"Si, Señor, he say, 'let me catch that Jeemy. I feex him.'"

When Don Lisandro observed the sombrero, he was sure the American wore it as an insult. He wished to fight. Uncle Jack recognized Jimmy's work, explained

and apologized. The Don decided not to kill Uncle Jack on the spot but there was no land bought or sold that day, and an angry man searched the Mission grounds for the penitent artist.

The American muchacho didn't know where to hide and in attempting to keep out of his Uncle Jack's sight he ran into Don Lisandro on horseback. Grasping his riding whip the Don sprang to the ground and threatened dreadful things in Spanish and English when he should get his hands on Jimmy.

Like a flash of lightning Jimmy climbed a slender eucalyptus tree and the only thing Don Lisandro could do was to remain below and continue his remarks in two languages. At last, having exhausted

his vocabulary, the Don galloped away and Jimmy began a hasty descent. Fortunately, as it proved, the boy fell and Antonio Moreno picked him up, unconscious, and carried him to the Mission. Jimmy quickly revived, but looked so pale and was so bruised and hurt, Uncle Jack really could n't give him the promised thrashing.

When Mary Louise heard of the accident, she bade her friends good-by, took her cat and hastened to the Mission, where she wept over her injured brother.

"What you crying 'bout, silly?" demanded Jimmy, the first minute he and his sister were alone. "Don't you know that was a lucky fall for me? I 'm not hurt, don't make such a fuss. I could get up and

climb that eucalyptus tree again to-night if I wanted to. I 'm just staying in bed and looking sort of sad so Uncle Jack won't get all tired out giving me that lickin'. Sabe, Señorita?"

IN THE PADRE'S GARDEN

CARLOTA realized that there was war in the land when she saw her father buckle on his sword and pistols and ride away to join Governor Pico's forces at Santa Barbara. News came in July that the United States flag had been raised in Monterey and San Francisco and Don Lisandro waited to hear no more.

Both Governor Pico and General Castro had issued one proclamation after another, urging the Californians to rally for the defence of their country. Americans, particularly Fremont's men, were called highwaymen and vandals. The vice-consul of Spain, then in Santa Barbara, denounced the invaders as an armed gang of United States thieves. Throughout California the feeling against Americans was intense.

Jimmy Radcliffe listened to the daily gossip at the barracks with his mouth and eyes wide open; Mary Louise wept and trembled; but Carlota longed to avenge her country's wrongs. When she heard that the Mexican colors had been hauled down at Monterey, the

American flag raised in its place, and that Commodore Sloat declared his intention of carrying the Stars and Stripes throughout California, she was furious.

"If I were a man I would go to the war, too," she cried. "That American commodore dared to say in his proclamation that he comes as a friend to the inhabitants of California. Oh, I wish I were a man."

Carlota was glad when the governor appointed her father one of the captains of militia known as "defenders of national independence and of the laws," and tried her childish best to induce Antonio Moreno and other Mexicans to go at once to Los Angeles without waiting for the signal of alarm,

when every Californian between the ages of fifteen and sixty would be compelled to fight, according to the proclamation of Governor Pico, issued the last week in July. Antonio Moreno did n't tell the little Spanish girl that his sympathies at that time were with the Americans and that he and many of his friends were tired of Mexican rule.

Two months later an Indian woman, one of the household servants, was taken ill; and Carlota, to please her, went for the Padre. She found Mary Louise in the garden.

"Where 's the Padre?" asked Carlota.

"In his house," was the reply; "he has a caller just now. I am

so glad you came over. It's dreadfully lonesome."

"But your mother is with you now," suggested Carlota, "surely you 're not lonesome when you have your mother?"

Mary Louise, resting her face upon Yankee's head, began to cry. "But I have just found out," she sobbed, "that my father is in the war and that Uncle Jack is fighting the Desert Indians and watching Castro's men on the San Bernardino frontier. Oh, dear, dear. I wish we 'd never left the United States."

Carlota was sorry for Mary Louise. She was wondering what she could say to comfort her little friend when the golden head was lifted. Mary Louise dropped the

cat, rose to her feet, and wiped her eyes.

"I 'd like to know," said she, "what the Mexicans are thinking about? Why don't they know enough to give up before any more men are killed? My father may shoot your father before sunset to-night. Only think, Carlota, how dreadful it is for General Flores to hold out against the United States after the Governor and General Castro have fled."

"My father," was the reply, "would shed his last drop of blood, I tell you, in defence of his country."

"Yes, but what kind of a country is it?" inquired Mary Louise. "It is n't like the United States."

"Glad of it. The Ameri-

cans are a lot of pirates," retorted Carlota.

"They are not!" insisted Mary Louise. "They are a nation of brave men."

"Brave men!" echoed the daughter of Spain. "My dear Señorita, you don't know the meaning of the word brave unless you know about the Spanish pioneers and what they did in this part of the world before anybody ever heard of the United States! Your history has no such stories."

Thoroughly angry, Carlota told rapidly one tale after another of Spanish heroism and conquest.

"Now, then," she concluded, "who were your great men in the old days? Did ever a man take such a walk as our De Vaca?"

"I don't know about walks," sobbed Mary Louise, "but I do know the Padre said you were a sweet-tempered child, and — and you act worse 'n a grizzly bear."

"Yes, and your Uncle Jack said you were a regular little saint," was Carlota's remark. "Name your great men, will you, name one if you can?"

"George Washington," was the instant response.

"What did he do?"

"He—he never told a lie."

"You baby. I would cry if I were you," and Carlota walked away, her head in the air.

In the meantime Yankee trotted from one little girl to the other, seeming uncertain whether to declare in favor of the United States

or Mexico. At last he jumped upon the adobe wall and washed his face while Carlota went in search of the Padre, and Mary Louise sought her mother.

"DON LISANDRO GALLOPED INTO HIS OWN COURTYARD, BRINGING THE NEWS OF THE REVOLT"

THE FANDANGO

ONE morning, early in October, Don Lisandro galloped into his own courtyard, bringing the news of the revolt in Los Angeles.

"The Americanos have been forced to capitulate," said he, "and our capital is once more in the hands of Mexicans. Flores is elected governor."

Little Spanish children never interrupt their parents, and Carlota

waited half an hour before she found an opportunity to ask her father how General Flores happened to be fighting again, having once been captured and given his liberty on parole.

"I supposed when you are out on parole," said she, "that you had to promise not to bear arms against the enemy. I thought General Flores had honestly promised not to fight against the United States."

"So he did, and many another distinguished Californian," observed Don Lisandro, "and if captured they will be shot."

"But," persisted Carlota, "it is n't honorable to break your word. A good man would n't do it."

"Children should not criticise their elders," said her father, some-

what sternly. "But since I know you meant no disrespect I will try to explain this to you. It is dishonorable for anyone to tell a lie, and for a soldier to break his parole is generally considered a very mean lie. Neither your father nor your Uncle José would fight the Americanos again after having been given their freedom on parole.

"General Flores and some of the others of our gallant soldiers, however, believe that in this case the end justifies the means, and that it is right to make a sacrifice of their personal honor in defence of their country; and they know that their bravery cannot be questioned, for they take the terrible risk of being shot without question

if they should be captured a second time."

"Oh!" cried poor little Carlota, not understanding exactly, but firm in her faith in her father, "I am so glad you and Uncle José will not break parole if you are captured and allowed to go!"

Then Don Lisandro kissed his brave little girl, and said:

"We will have a fandango and forget war. Uncle José is coming out to-night and a dozen officers with him. We'll have carnival merriment if you choose."

"Oh, may we have a cascarone ball, even if it isn't carnival time?"

"If your mother is willing and you and Chona wish to make the cascarones."

"The Indian servants will help,"

said Carlota, as she ran to find her mother.

War was forgotten until in the midst of the preparations for the dance in the great hall, Carlota thought of Mary Louise.

"I must get on my pony and go over to the Mission and invite Jimmy and his sister and their mother," said she.

"No one needs an invitation to a dance in southern California," suggested the Doña Ysabel. "Surely those children know the custom of the country; every one comes from far and near to attend a fandango."

"I imagine, though, that Mary Louise needs a little coaxing," observed Carlota, feeling thankful that she was not obliged to explain

why the little Americans must have a special invitation.

The Padre persuaded Mary Louise and her mother to attend the ball. Jimmy could n't be convinced that he would enjoy that particular fandango, nor did he confess to his mother that he had reasons for not wishing to meet the owner of the jewelled sombrero. The boy cheated himself out of a jolly time by not understanding that a Spanish gentleman would never be rude to his worst enemy if that enemy happened to be his guest. More than that, it is doubtful if Jimmy could have found an entertainment more satisfactory than a cascarone ball.

"You're a traitor to your country;" he told Mary Louise,

"a stand-by-your-flag American would n't go to the party. Uncle Sam will have a great opinion of you."

"'This is n't a children's war,'" quoted Mary Louise, "that 's what Carlota said her mother told her before she came over to invite us, and, anyway, that it would do us all good to forget it for one night."

"But, don't you see," Jimmy resumed, "you might happen to be right in a battle just the same. Suppose Fremont's men should march down and surround the Del Villars' house. Suppose your father should take Don Lisandro prisoner to-night and find you there at the enemies' party. Would n't you feel proud?"

"Now see here, Jimmy Rad-

cliffe," remarked Mary Louise with unusual spirit, "you may go out and sit in the burying ground among the dead Indians if you wish, but mamma and I are going to the fandango."

"All right, go on. But you just remember that Belgium ball in the fourth reader where they were dancing just before the awful battle."

"Nonsense," retorted Mary Louise, "you 'll be the scared one. Why, Jimmy, you 'll be almost alone in the Mission; the Padre's going with us. I don't want to leave you here; you better come too. You 'll be afraid."

"Not I. Adios, Señorita, American muchacho going over to the guard-house."

"Yes, but it 's the enemies' guard-house," were the little sister's parting words.

At first when Mary Louise entered the great hall she saw nothing but Mexican flags; but the instant Carlota and Chona greeted her with smiling faces and outstretched arms and the military band from Los Angeles began to play, she saw lovely Spanish ladies in gay costumes and handsome men in jewel-trimmed coats.

"Do you see that tall officer over there?" whispered Carlota to Mary Louise, "the one with gold lace on his trousers and silver buttons on a green velvet jacket? Well, he 's my Uncle José, and he 's Governor Pico's cousin. I have had such good times at his rancho

near San Juan Bautista. His little girls look like our baby Rosita, so you may know they are pretty. Well, he 's the dearest uncle in the world, and he loves fun. Now you and Chona watch while I go and break a cascarone on his head."

"What 's a cascarone? Do tell me."

"Oh, don't you know? It is an egg shell filled with cologne, or else gilt or any kind of fancy paper cut in tiny, tiny pieces. The opening in the egg shell is sealed with wax. The game is to break one on somebody's head when they don't know it, and then just as sure as anything you 'll get one broken on your own head. In the dining-room there 's a big Indian basket full of them."

"I wish Jimmy was here," remarked Mary Louise. "He'd like that game, only I'd be dripping all the time."

Carlota laughed. "You watch me fool Uncle José. But, Chona, why don't you and Mary Louise come and give him a good soaking too?"

"Wait, then," and Chona darted across the hall to the dining-room, returning in a minute with two more egg shells.

When Uncle José saw the three conspirators approach, he smiled, and gathering Carlota in his arms, placed her on his shoulder. The next minute the child broke an egg shell on his head. Streams of cologne water poured over the Californian's face, rolling into his neck and filling his ears.

Putting Carlota on her feet and bending forward to shake off the cologne, the man felt another bump on his head, and the laughing Chona was urging Mary Louise to break her cascarone quickly, that Uncle José should have a double shower. As Mary Louise hesitated, Carlota snatched the missile and the third cascarone poured its contents down the back of Uncle José's neck.

"This is no way to take advantage of a gentleman," complained Uncle José, mopping the cologne with a big handkerchief and shaking his fist at the delighted children. "Nice way to welcome your uncle. The little doll girl here is a lady — she would n't behave so badly. What 's your name, little one?"

"Her father is Señor Thomas Radcliffe," whispered Carlota, "and he's up north with Fremont's men."

"Ah!" exclaimed Uncle José. "El Capitan Radcliffe. I've heard of him."

Little did the Californian dream when and under what circumstances he would meet the father of Mary Louise.

THE ROBBER'S SASH

LATE in the evening Mary Louise entered into the spirit of the cascarone ball. Not once did the little girl break an egg shell except in self-defence, but lest some one should give her an unexpected drenching, she kept a cascarone constantly in her hand. Twice a handsome man showered her in gilt paper and she had been unable to get even with him. He seemed

to be a stranger and had a way of keeping his face turned from the crowd. The hall was warm, but the man wore an immense serape and didn't remove his pointed hat.

At last the stranger broke an egg shell filled with cologne on the child's head, when she followed him to an outer porch, ready with upraised hand to let him know how it felt to be soaked in cologne, if she should catch him. That was the trouble. Try hard as she would the stranger kept out of reach. Finally, as if he was tired of running, the man sat down on a rustic seat just outside a little summer house leading into the rose garden.

"Better give up, little girl," he called, laughing heartily as he spoke.

Mary Louise intended to go a few steps nearer, throw the egg shell in the man's face, and then fly back to the hall. The next second the man seized her and placing one big hand over her mouth said this:

"Tell me quickly where Don Lisandro keeps his bags of gold. Otherwise away you go to the mountains to my cave. Listen. My band is just outside. I 'll whistle and you 'll hear an answer from twenty mounted men."

It was even as the robber said, but it happened that Carlota was searching for Mary Louise, and coming on the porch, a candle held above her head, she saw a figure near the summer house, and ran in that direction, calling to her guest

and saying, "Where are you, you little Americano, where are you?"

"Answer her," commanded the robber, "say you chased me with a cascarone. We 'll both return to the hall, and if you tell one word of what has happened you'll be sorry."

At first Carlota was satisfied: but a bit of scarlet sash escaped from the folds of the serape and flashing her candle in the man's face the child recognized her robber, and screamed. Mary Louise fled. The robber started toward the desert, but Carlota grabbed at his sash and hung on, at the same time calling for the help she knew would come.

The man drew a long knife from his legging, cut the sash and es-

caped. Carlota fell backward, the scarlet sash fluttered to the ground, and a band of horsemen galloped toward the mountains.

If the United States army had been camped outside the Casa Del Villar that night, the ball would have gone on without interruption so long as the enemy remained quiet. Finding Carlota safe and rejoicing in the possession of the costly sash, Don Lisandro and his guests danced, until dawn revealed the fact that every valuable saddle had been stolen from the backs of the waiting horses.

JIMMY HELPS MAKE GUNPOWDER

OBLIGED to return to Los Angeles the day following the fandango, Don Lisandro sent his family with five Indian servants to the Mission. Mary Louise and her mother were glad to welcome them to the ruined apartments offered by the Padre.

The Doña Ysabel and Mrs. Radcliffe avoided the subject of war, each thankful for the other's

company. Baby Rosita was a joy during those dreary days. She was always ready for a romp and soon demanded much attention. As for Jimmy, he missed his opportunity. Instead of teasing three little girls who were at that time allowed to play nowhere outside the Mission grounds, he became interested in the manufacture of gunpowder.

The Californian army was poorly equipped. Their principal cannon, said to be the oldest in the world, were of great historic interest, having been brought from Spain and used by Cortez in the conquest of Mexico. Every old pistol and musket in the country was dragged from its hiding place, and yet there were not enough to

supply the demand. Worst of all, ammunition was lacking.

In the old days, gunpowder was manufactured in San Gabriel. Remembering this, Don Lisandro ordered a large amount to be made at the guard-house for the use of the Californian army.

In the village of San Gabriel there lived a man known among the American settlers as that "no-good Yankee." The women called him "shiftless." He and Jimmy became great friends after Uncle Jack's departure. It seemed to the boy that the "no-good Yankee" could do anything he tried; but he was such a lazy, lawless scamp Uncle Jack did n't consider him fit company for a boy. This "no-good Yankee" was also

popular among a certain class of Mexicans, particularly the kind who were usually to be found in the vicinity of the barracks.

"Know a thing er two 'bout gunpowder myself," suggested the Yankee, winking at Jimmy. "Let's you 'n me give the Mexicanos a helping hand?"

That was the beginning of Jimmy's interest in gunpowder.

"Don't you see, Jimmy, you 'n me ain't doing the right thing by our country's flag. You ought to be a drummer boy in the ranks a-drumming yourself to glory 'n immortal fame, and I ought ter be a-facin' the foe a-gettin' shot to pieces every day and preparin' a pension fer my old age and a chance to make speeches to conventions."

"'KNOW A THING ER TWO 'BOUT GUNPOWDER MYSELF,' SUGGESTED THE YANKEE"

"That 's what," laughed Jimmy.

"Well, then, Bub, see here:" and the Yankee, looking as wondrous wise as the man who jumped into the bramble bush, leaned forward and chuckled.

"You 'n me 'll have a hand in the makin' of that gunpowder, and it won't be the kind they used in the battle of Bunker Hill. You can bet on that! Come a step nearer, Bub, and I 'll explain."

Cautiously the Yankee unfolded a scheme for tampering with the gunpowder in a way to render it practically useless.

One lovely day in November, Jimmy overheard this conversation between Carlota and his sister.

"How I wish we were living in the good old Mission days," said

Carlota, "before the time of revolutions and cruel wars. This would be such a perfect world to live in."

Mary Louise buried her face in a rose and replied: "I believe I should like to live here always, where the birds sing every day and there is no winter, if—if California belonged to the United States and the soldiers would go away."

"If that happens," sighed Carlota, "and I 'm sure I hope it never will, our family will have to go back to Old Mexico or Spain. But I don't believe this dreadful war will ever end."

"Oh, yes, it will," Jimmy prophesied. "It 'll end pretty quick. Fizz—biff—don't be scared, girls, no bang!"

"How silly you act, Jimmy," re-

monstrated Mary Louise. "It's just because you're always with that Yankee."

"That's all you know," was the retort. "Maybe that sweet Yankee and General James Radcliffe'll put an end to the war before Christmas."

"Don't speak of Christmas," begged Carlota. "Uncle José and all his folks were coming to our house for the holidays, and now,—who knows what will become of Uncle José before Christmas. You better not forget he's out on parole."

"If all the Mexicans were like your father and your uncle," said Mary Louise, slowly, "I would n't mind being Spanish."

"And if all the men in the United States were like your Uncle Jack,"

Carlota added quickly, "I 'd feel different about the American flag."

"And if all the soldiers on both sides were such softies as you, there would n't be anything said 'bout the importance of gunpowder. You two just wait."

TO SAVE A SPANISH GENTLEMAN

BLACKBIRD returned to the Mission one morning in December bearing dreadful news. Carlota saw him as he dashed past the barracks, leaped from his horse, and ran into the chapel.

"Why, Blackbird," exclaimed the child. "Blackbird, what can be the trouble!"

It required all her strength to force the great doors open

wide enough to admit her small body, for Blackbird had closed them the instant he gained an entrance.

"Blackbird, where are you?" demanded Carlota, trying to accustom her eyes to the dim interior.

"Hush, no noise, Señorita," whispered Blackbird, when Carlota discovered him hiding behind the baptismal font in the small vault-like room opening off the chapel. "Come in. Shut the door."

Blackbird had always been considered harmless, but the wild expression of his face frightened Carlota. Standing just inside the room, in the deep hollow of the stone floor, a hollow worn by the feet of long forgotten Indians, she said, "One minute, and then I will

go. Where have you been all summer?"

"San Juan Bautista. Blackbird afraid to stay here. Big robbers in the mountains. Americanos kill everybody. Blackbird ran away."

"Were you on my uncle's rancho?" continued Carlota.

Terror overspread Blackbird's face as he cowered closer to the floor and nodded in reply to the question.

"Blackbird, what is the matter? Tell me quickly."

"Fremont marching south," chattered the Indian. "Americanos kill us all. Blackbird afraid. Got your Uncle José — going to shoot him!"

Carlota sprang forward, seized Blackbird by the shoulders and

repeated, "They have my Uncle José! They 're going to shoot him! When? Where? Tell me quickly?"

A dull look was the only answer as the Indian muttered, "Americanos catch Blackbird — kill him sure."

Uncle José had been caught inside the American lines in civilian clothes seeking information concerning General Fremont's plans. He had been tried as a spy and sentenced to be shot.

There was not a moment to lose. Carlota gave the Indian a shake and cried: "Tell my mother I 've gone to Los Angeles to see my father. We must save Uncle José. Do you hear?"

"No sabe. No sabe," grumbled the Indian.

"But you must listen to this," cried Carlota. "Tell my mother I 've gone to Los Angeles to my father."

"Americanos kill Carlota," warned the Indian, but the child flew from the chapel.

Chona's pony, Babita, was tied to the pepper-tree beside the stairway leading to the choir loft. Springing into the saddle Carlota galloped away from the Mission without a further word of explanation or thought of personal danger.

"We can't save him, my child," groaned Don Lisandro, when Carlota found her father.

"We must, we must," was the reply. "We'll find General Fremont and beg him to spare Uncle José. If we only get there in time."

"I shall send an escort back to the Mission with you," observed Don Lisandro, "and start immediately, although it is useless and I shall be taken prisoner."

"Oh, but I must go too, I must, I must!" Carlota entreated, sobs choking her words.

"It will be a terrible ride," objected her father, "all day, all night, perhaps."

"It's to save Uncle José," urged Carlota. "The general might listen to me! I must go!"

Two fresh horses were saddled, and father and daughter began the perilous trip.

At dawn the following day, after changing horses many times, they reached Fremont's camp.

José Pico was to be shot at

noon. Gaining admittance to the presence of the American chief, Carlota and her father found him besieged by relatives and friends of the doomed man; wife, children, neighbors, all weeping, wringing their hands, and begging for mercy.

It was an agonizing scene. An American officer, the man who captured Pico, who was standing beside Fremont, turned his face to the wall when Carlota burst into their midst, and throwing herself at Fremont's feet, in grief-stricken accents begged for her uncle's life. A moment more, and Don Lisandro, the proud, haughty enemy of all Americans, fell upon his knees, beseeching for mercy, and vowing to offer no further resistance to the

conquerors if one Spanish gentleman might be spared to his family.

Fremont, unable to endure more, pronounced the promise of pardon. Despair was followed by tumultuous joy. At a word from Fremont, the American who was standing beside him bowed, left the room, and returned with the condemned man. Calm, quiet, and composed, Uncle José stood before his judge. No shadow of emotion had crossed his face in the presence of friend or enemy since he had listened to the sentence of death.

Breathless silence ensued, while Fremont spoke the magic words of pardon. It was then Uncle José broke down and with his little children clinging about his neck, he, too, knelt at Fremont's

feet and promised never again to bear arms against the United States.

Later the American officer was introduced to both Don Lisandro and Uncle José. Carlota rejoiced to learn that he was Jimmy's father.

"Americanos are brave, generous men," she said to Don Lisandro, when he told her that after a long talk with Fremont he was convinced that the best thing for his unhappy country was to be under the protection of the United States government.

"I never used to let Mary Louise know it," laughed Carlota, "but I always have thought there could n't be a prettier flag than the Stars and Stripes."

BATTLE OF SAN GABRIEL

ON that day in the middle of December, when Uncle José was pardoned, Don Lisandro resigned his command and returned to the Mission. The Americans were marching upon Los Angeles. General Kearny, after taking possession of New Mexico, had arrived with troops from the East. The twenty-seventh of December, Fremont, on his southward march,

entered Santa Barbara and two days later forces under General Kearny and Commodore Stockton left San Diego with the purpose of meeting Fremont at the capital.

These facts Carlota's father learned from messengers sent by friends who had agreed to keep him informed of the movements of the United States troops. There was a rumor that the Mexicans threatened to destroy the Mission and to spare neither women nor children. The Padre and Don Lisandro were making preparations for the defence of those dear to them when Uncle Jack arrived at the head of a small force and camped outside the walls. Jimmy visited the camp, returning with tales of war and bloodshed that

frightened the little girls until even he was satisfied.

Carlota overheard many a serious talk between her father and the Padre. She gathered that the cause of the Californians was hopeless. If the United States failed to take possession of the country, then it would fall into the hands of England or Russia; but there was no question of failure on the part of the American troops during those closing days of the war. The Californians were few in number and poorly equipped. Their gunpowder had proved useless in many a recent fight. The "no-good Yankee" had disappeared, and Jimmy avoided the subject of gunpowder.

One day early in January, when

the troops were closing in upon Los Angeles, Carlota sought the Padre.

"You told my father last night that you believe peace may have been declared, and that war between the United States and Mexico is at an end, — that that is the report."

"True, my daughter, war was declared months before the news reached the Pacific coast."

"Well," continued the child, "Mary Louise is crying all the time, and worrying for fear her father will be killed, and I don't like to think that all our old friends in Los Angeles may be shot to pieces, and nobody knows what will become of us here at the Mission! My father says he won't

fight against his own flag unless he is obliged to do so; but, if they come here and attack the Mission, he will defend himself and his family even against those who were his best friends."

Carlota paused, shrugged her shoulders, and went on rapidly, "Now, what's the use of it all? The Franciscans are peacemakers. Won't you go to General Flores and beg him to make peace? Oh, dear! When you know you may be right in a battle any minute, you begin to feel as if war is a dreadful thing. I don't care if Jimmy does say I'm a coward. Won't you go and talk with General Flores?"

"I will," agreed the Padre. "I have thought of it before. Flores is an old friend of mine."

So it came about that General Flores sent two men to meet the American army on its march from San Diego. These men bore a letter asking for a cessation of hostilities, and suggesting that as news had been received from Old Mexico to the effect that peace had been declared between Mexico and the United States, it might be well to learn the terms of settlement before shedding more blood.

The Padre stayed in Los Angeles several days before returning to the Mission, but he sent word by Antonio Moreno that Flores had complied with his request.

"Oh, I hope it's all over now," exclaimed Carlota, smiling at the anxious mothers gathered on the Padre's veranda. "I used to think

I was brave but my teeth chatter at the very thought of a cannon ball whizzing through the air."

"If General Flores has asked the Americans to wait a while they will do it," added Mary Louise, the least ghost of a smile appearing on her pale face. "I used to think, too, that I wished I was at Bunker Hill, but I didn't know what I was talking about."

"I still wish it," remarked Jimmy.

"Yes, you do," mocked his sister. "Why, Carlota, he's getting thin he's so frightened. Wish you had been at Bunker Hill, indeed!"

"I mean," explained Jimmy, "I wish I were there now."

At that moment Blackbird ran across the courtyard and hid behind

Carlota's mother, wrapping his head in her skirts.

"Why, Blackbird, what's the trouble now?" asked the Señora Ysabel.

"They're coming, they're coming."

"Who are coming?"

"The Americanos."

Every face grew white. Were the soldiers at the very gates? How could it be? The Padre appeared in time to prevent a panic.

"There is no immediate cause for alarm," said he. "Commodore Stockton refused to consider peace because he once released Flores on parole. We must be ready."

There was but little sleep at the Mission that night. No one in San Gabriel had dreamed that a

decisive battle would be fought almost under the shadow of the chapel walls, and great was their surprise when dawn revealed the Californians in position on a bluff above the river. They had mustered their forces and there waited the coming of the Americans.

All was confusion at the Mission. The women and children, with the terrified Blackbird, hurried to the chapel, although Jimmy managed to escape unseen. It seemed to the boy more horrible to be imprisoned within those thick walls during the din of battle than to skulk around outside and watch proceedings. The windows in the chapel were high above reach.

When Mary Louise missed Jimmy her grief was pitiful. Mrs.

Radcliffe was about to venture in search of him when a big door swung partly open and a small body was thrown in by Antonio Moreno, who accompanied the action by vigorous speech to the effect that Jimmy was a very foolish boy.

"I don't want to stay here," exclaimed Jimmy, scrambling to his feet in spite of bruises. "I guess I know enough to keep out of danger."

"Oh!" screamed Carlota, "he has papa's jewelled sombrero! Oh, oh, oh! Has anything happened to my father?"

"Nope. He's all right," said Jimmy. "My! Isn't he brave, though? He went right up to General Flores and told him he

ought to surrender. Said the Americanos were generous and would pardon him for breaking his parole if he did; but even if he was shot he ought to give up a lost cause for the sake of his countrymen. That made Flores awful mad, and he drew a pistol and shot right at your father. He missed him, though, but the bullet shot Don Lisandro's sombrero right off his head! Then your father got on his horse and started slowly away. Then they all began to shoot at him, but he began to gallop then, and they could n't hit him. Now he 's safe with Uncle Jack and his men. He must have felt awfully sad, though, because he was crying like a baby. But he was n't scared of them a bit!

I sneaked out and got the sombrero before the jewels were lost. I tell you, Carlota, it was quiet as Sunday in Mexico by that time, where your father had galloped by; but Antonio came along just then, looking for him, I guess, and he must have been pretty mad when he saw me, the way he jerked me into his saddle and threw me in here. I 've had enough of war, though."

"So have we all," shuddered Carlota.

A moment later a wounded man was brought into the chapel. It was Antonio Moreno, who proved to be not seriously injured and was angry at the thought of having fainted in his saddle. Carlota's mother and Mrs. Radcliffe

would n't allow him to leave the chapel.

"Tell us what 's going on?" begged Jimmy. "Anybody getting killed?"

Bit by bit Antonio told the little he knew. El Capitan Radcliffe had been sent ahead with a detachment just in time for the battle. The Americans escaped destruction when crossing the nearly dry river-bed only because the Californians resisted their advance with gunpowder that was worthless. It carried cannon balls a little way and then let them drop.

Soon a number of slightly wounded men were brought into the chapel. Even the children helped to care for them. Sounds

of battle came nearer and nearer the Mission. Jimmy discovered a perilous way to climb into the choir loft where, reaching a small window, he watched the scene below. Carlota scrambled after the boy, but turned away satisfied with one glimpse through the window.

"Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy, come down," she begged. "It is awful."

THE AMERICAN FLAG

HALF an hour later Jimmy shouted, "The Americans are coming straight on and the Californians are falling back! We're sure to come out ahead! It's our victory! Our side will win — it has won!"

Climbing down from the choir loft the boy ran to Carlota.

"Do you s'pose there's an American flag in this place?" said he.

An American flag in the chapel of San Gabriel Mission! A wounded soldier, one who had come overland from Massachusetts to settle in California, grinned at the remark.

"Shades of brown Padres and glory of old Spain!" he chuckled. "An American flag here!"

"Of course there is n't one!" answered Carlota. "Six weeks ago I should have torn an American flag in rags with my own hands if any one had dared wave it here! But what shall we do? We need a flag! My father and Uncle José say that they think California will be better off under the Stars and Stripes, and they know what is right."

"Too bad you tore up this here

red bandana of mine," suggested a Yankee with bandaged head and arm in a sling, "you could have used it fer the red stripes, and Mikey Malone's countenance over there 'd a-answered fer the blue, and the Spanish lady's head rigging would do fer the white."

"Oh," cried Carlota, "I know what we 'll do, we 'll make a flag, of course. I 'll give the robber's sash for the red, mamma's scarf for the white" —

"And — I — I — I — don't you see my dress is blue!" offered Mary Louise.

"Yank her off," commented Jimmy.

"But the robber's sash is in the room where Chona and I sleep," objected Carlota, "and I 'm afraid

to go alone with bullets whistling around."

"I'll go with you," said Mrs. Radcliffe; "there's a doorway back of the altar leading into the Padre's rooms and we can go all the way under shelter."

"Oh, don't go, don't go!" wailed Mary Louise, clinging to her mother's skirts.

"Shut up! can't you?" roared Jimmy. The minute his mother's back was turned he said to Mary Louise: "All you've got to do in the conquest of California is to keep your mouth shut and you won't do that! What have you done for your country, I'd like to know? Did you help make gunpowder?"

"You did that for the Mexicans," retorted Mary Louise, shuddering

as the adobe walls of the chapel were shaken by a crash.

"Mary Louise, that's all you know! That Yankee and I and some other fellers spoiled that powder, do you sabe?"

"How did you dare?" asked Jimmy's sister.

"It was risky," admitted the boy, thrusting his hands in his pockets and giving his cap a backward tip. "I've done my part for Uncle Sam."

"And I'm going to give up this pretty blue dress that Aunt Martha sent me from Philadelphia," added Mary Louise, "and that's something."

Mrs. Radcliffe and Carlota quickly returned, the red sash trailing through the air behind

them as Carlota lifted it above her head and ran toward the children.

"I brought all the needles, scissors, and thread I could find, so every woman and child here may work," said Mrs. Radcliffe, at the same time taking off her little girl's blue dress and slipping on a fresh white one.

Carlota's mother removed the beautiful scarf she had been wearing on her head, giving Jimmy a chance to show his skill in cutting stars.

Time passed more quickly after work was begun on the American flag, although the fingers that threaded needles were unsteady. When it seemed to Carlota and Mary Louise that they could be

patient no longer, Uncle José burst into the chapel announcing that the Californians were in full retreat and out of range of the enemy's guns.

"El Capitan Radcliffe is safe," he declared, bowing to Mrs. Radcliffe, the only American woman in the chapel.

"And—and papa?" questioned Carlota.

"Is all right," was the reply. "He has gone after Flores to advise him to hasten north to San Fernando to meet Fremont and surrender to him. Stockton threatens to shoot every Mexican who has broken his parole—you know what that means."

"Death to many of our friends," groaned the Señora Ysabel.

"Won't the American troops overtake Flores? Is there any chance for them to escape? And is n't my husband in danger from Flores?"

"I am sure not," said Don Jose. "He is calmer by now, and undoubtedly sorry for shooting at your husband in a moment of passion. He will warn them of their danger in time," he added, "and by avoiding Los Angeles they are saved. Stockton proposes to camp here on the battle-field for the rest of the day and to-night. To-morrow morning we will march in and take possession of the capital. Listen, children, the American band is playing."

"Oh, it's 'Hail Columbia, Happy Land,'" shouted Mary Louise, while the wounded soldiers, Jimmy,

and Mrs. Radcliffe took up the refrain.

Antonio Moreno struggled to his feet, and threw wide open the chapel doors. Nearer and nearer came the stirring music, while every one who could stand or crawl rushed outside, shouting and singing in excitement.

Seizing the completed flag, Carlota ran with it up the old stone stairway, and tied it swiftly and firmly to the iron railing at the top. A breeze from the sea caught the flag and waved it triumphantly over the old Mission.

The crowd below, for a crowd had gathered, saw the flag, and gave cheer upon cheer, tossing their hats in the air and embracing one another. An instant later a salute

"TIED IT SWIFTLY AND FIRMLY TO THE IRON RAILING"

was fired from the battle-field. The soldiers had seen the scarlet stripes and white stars.

The band was playing "Three Cheers for the Red, White, and Blue," when Carlota climbed upon the adobe wall beside the children who were watching the brave bit of color floating out against the blue sky. Yankee was with them, purring proudly as became an American cat.

"It's my flag now," exclaimed Carlota, "my—our beautiful flag."

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